THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

October/November 2022 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Is Better an Enemy of Good?

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

I sometimes think of people as either divers or dippers. When the first group goes to the ocean, no matter how cold the water is, they plunge right in, while the second group, no matter how warm the water is, inches their way into the surf. Saint Matthew, who left his tax collecting job immediately after meeting Christ, was a diver. Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who gradually widened holes in the bottom of his shoes before he took on the austerity of walking barefoot, was a dipper. The first group is bold, and the second is cautious.

Over the years, I have learned that there are two more groups, doubters and deniers. The first need substantial proof before they act. Saint Thomas, who insisted on putting his fingers in Jesus' wounds before he would believe in the resurrection, was a doubter. The Pharisees, who saw Jesus cure a blind mute, but insisted that Christ cast out demons by the power of Satan, were deniers. The insistence of happy swimmers that the water is warm might persuade a doubter to become a dipper, but no amount of evidence convinces a denier.

Depending on the circumstance, most of us take on different roles. For example, I am a denier when it comes to sky diving. My fear of heights and my Murphy's Law conviction that the rare occurrence of parachute failure would be more likely in my case, convince me to never jump out of a airplane. I am a diver when it comes to public speaking, while many folks, due to stage fright, are absolute deniers.

When faced with enormous problems like the climate emergency, I have gone from doubter, to dipper, to diver. Al Gore's 2006 film "An Inconvenient Truth" prompted me to investigate ways to help save future generations avoid climate catastrophes. Increased knowledge persuaded me and my community to take multiple dives; putting solar panels on our roof, buying hybrid cars, and replacing natural gas stoves and heat with electric heat pumps.

While on this journey, I saw a cartoon of a Prius driver with a bumper sticker that read: "I'm destroying the planet slower than you." Such rebuttals to the

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Tom Cornell
(1933-2022)

By Michael J. Baxter

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from a eulogy delivered for Tom's funeral at Saint Mary's Catholic Church, Marlboro, New York, on August 10, 2022

I met Tom Cornell in November of 1981. Campus Ministry was starting a draft counselling program in response to the reinstitution of the draft registration. We wanted to get students to write up CO [conscientious objector] statements in case they were drafted, so we needed to be trained. People said, get Tom Cornell.

Two of us picked him up at the airport. We went to dinner, talked about our plans, Tom jotted down some notes, and then the conversation got more freewheeling which is when I got nervous.

Tom started talking about things back in the day—leading the first public protest against the Vietnam War, burning his draft card, getting arrested, six months in prison. . . . all told with an edgy vocabulary that came easy to him. He used words like "revolution," "anarchism," "Trotskyist," and "the MOBE," short for the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam.

When I mentioned that our group was in touch with NISBCO [National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors] run by the American Friends Service Committee, he immediately harrumphed, then sneered, "Oh, you mean the American *Fiends* Service Committee?" He then recounted an offense the Friends had committed back in the day. He gave what I have come to call THE STARE.

We had a rather moderate group of faculty

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Better

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ecological pretenses of hybrid drivers, while true, since the Prius still consumes gasoline, seemed to me less constructive criticism than self-justification for those still driving full-gasoline powered cars. The cartoon reminded me of how often I've heard non-runners say, "Running is bad for your knees." Of course, like the anti-hybrid bumper sticker, this critique is not without merit, but seems more of an excuse for remaining a couch potato than a serious concern for runner's joints.

Deniers are not conspiracy theorists. They base their positions on facts. A person who will not go into the sea might say, "The majority of fatal shark attacks occur in three feet of water. Rogue waves, undertow, rip tides, and the sting of jelly fish can lead to drowning." All true. What the denier fails to take into account is the odds of any of these things happening on a particular day at the beach are miniscule.

When I suggested that the climate emergency can be slowed by converting from fossil fuels to electric heat pumps, critics replied that doing so still requires fossil fuels and nuclear power to generate the electricity. They also said that the construction of hybrid and electric cars is very expensive and requires more energy than traditional vehicles. In the short run, they are correct, but, as more green energy is produced and as the energy savings of more efficient systems is taken into account, progress toward confronting the climate emergency becomes more and more apparent. Government rebates and competition between producers also help make these changes more affordable too.

The critics are correct, though, that environmentalists do not have perfect solutions. Americans in particular are loathe to accept anything less than perfection. Sean Connery in "The Rock" says, "Losers always whine about doing their best." Will Ferell in "The Ballad of Ricky Bobby" is raised on the mantra, "If you're not first, you're last." Truth be told, I often refer to those who come in second in a race as "first loser." Even the peace movement can demand all or nothing. Back in the 1980s, some activists dismissed the nuclear freeze campaign as the "nuclear sneeze."

Vasu Murti, a life-long vegan and passionate animal rights advocate, takes a different approach in his article "Fight Climate Change with Diet Change" which appeared in June/July 2022 *Catholic Radical*. He says even those who skip one hamburger a week help fight climate change. He does not look down on dairy-eating vegetarians or non-red meat-eaters. He considers the conversion of doubters to dippers significant. He understands that when many people do small things for justice, their actions accumulate into something significant. He also recognizes that most of us don't become saints in a day.

This is a long introduction to the news that, thanks to being remembered in the will of a generous long-time reader, we are buying an electric car. As soon as December, we will have it and keep careful records on its performance which we will share with you. We know this choice is not perfect, but we want to do better and are willing to take this step in that direction. Like Saint Peter, we'll try to walk on water, and ask for God's help if we start sinking.

Doubters will ask us questions which we will try to answer as we gain more knowledge. Deniers will be harder to impress, but Theodore Giesel, AKA Dr. Seuss, gives us hope when one of his characters, who insisted over and over, "I do not like green eggs and ham," finally tries them and discovers, to his surprise, that he finds them delicious. Ω

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New Zealand Bishops on Palestine

by Cardinal John Dew, Bishop Michael Dooley, Bishop Michael Gielen, Bishop Stephen Lowe, and Bishop Paul Martin

The Holy Land is a special place for Christians everywhere, not least the Catholic communities of Aotearoa New Zealand. . . . And, of course, it is not just holy for Christianity, but also for the followers of Judaism and Islam. . . .

It is a matter of great anguish for [us] that the Holy Land continues to be a land of turmoil, bloodshed, and fear for many of those who live there, but most particularly for the ordinary Palestinian peoples of the occupied territories of the West Bank of the Jordan River and Gaza.... For decades now, these ordinary Palestinians have been reduced to the status of refugees in their own homeland.

Also for many decades now, attempts to find a lasting peace in the Holy Land that would provide security for the Palestinians and the ordinary people of Israel have remained elusive, seemingly utterly so. While there may have, at times, been good will, there has been no lasting way forward.

The concept of the so-called "two-state solution" whereby an independent Palestine would sit alongside Israel remains just that, a concept. The region flares into violence, bloodshed, and intransigent bickering at regular intervals. Israel continues to establish illegal settlements on Palestinian land in the West Bank, which it has occupied since capturing it in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and which under international law must be given back to the Palestinians as the heartland of their own state.

...The conflict in the Holy Land cannot be allowed to continue with no serious moves towards finding a just and peaceful solution for the peoples of Israel and Palestine, but particularly for the Palestinians, whose long years of turmoil, occupation, blockading (as in Gaza), and impoverishment are a blight on the region and indeed on humanity....

Last November, Pope Francis held what was his sixth Vatican meeting with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President. After the meeting, Pope Francis stressed that it was absolutely necessary to reactive direct dialogue in order to achieve a two-state solution via a more vigorous effort on the part of the international community. He reiterated that Jerusalem must be recognized by all as a place of encounter and not conflict, and that its status must preserve its identity and universal value as a Holy City for all three Abrahamic religions, through a special internationally guaranteed status.

The Catholic Bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand concur. It is both a tragedy and a disgrace that many political leaders internationally, who might be able to use their influence to end the suffering of the Palestinians and bring peace to Palestine and Israel, are not just sitting idle, but keep looking the other way.

What can we as Catholics do? We hear about the lands of Israel and Palestine all the time in our liturgies and scriptures. We should do more to express our support not just for peace, but for a continued Christian presence in Jerusalem, a city sacred to Christians, Muslims, and Jews alike. For centuries the region was part of the Ottoman Empire, then became the "British Palestine Mandate" after World War I. The 1947 United Nations plan to divide it into the new states of Israel and Palestine recommended that Jerusalem be covered by and international governance structure....

"Jerusalem is a Jewish city, a Christian city, a Muslim city...threatened by occupation and injustice." This is something we as Catholics in Aotearoa New Zealand can raise our voices over....

It was 20 years ago that the Catholic Bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand wrote in a formal statement on the Israel-Palestine conflict that "no amount of repression, occupation, or military force can dim the desire of a people to live with dignity and freedom in their homeland. We affirm the right of the Palestinian people to find dignity and freedom through the establishment of an independent state, which surely can be denied them no longer. Their freedom will also be freedom for Israel—freedom from fear, and the opportunity to move on from a conflict which has haunted the state of Israel since its birth. Justice will bless both peoples with peace."

It is a matter of terrible sorrow that little has happened to move on from the conflict in the 20 years since we wrote that, and that our words as written then need to be stated again today. Ω

Editor's Note: In the past twenty years, the Israeli government has increased illegal Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank to an extent that many human rights advocates say a two-state solution must give way to a single state that recognizes equals rights to all its residents, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish. .A consensus has also arisen among Israeli and international human rights organizations that Israel's Palestinian policy is so discriminatory and oppressive that it equals or exceeds apartheid.

Tom Cornell

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for our rather tame project. I was nervous that Tom would scare them off and torpedo the whole program, so at the end of dinner, I said something. He just nodded, said, "all right." I was nervous dropping him off at Michael and Margaret Garvey's house that night, nervous picking him up the next morning, nervous driving him to campus, nervous putting out the coffee, juice, and doughnuts. After introducing him, I stood in the back, scanning the room, nervous about the training he was about to give, about the outlandish things he was about to say. . . .

Well, Tom's presentation was brilliant. His points were clear, concise, knowledgeable, appropriately serious, yet also reassuring. He quoted the Gospels, the popes, Gandhi, King, and Dorothy Day. He expounded on traditional Catholic teaching on war and peace and explained the Church's recent, rapid evolution of Vatican II on matters of conscientious objection and non-violence.

Most of all, he assured us that the work of counseling young people on the moral implications of participating in war was central to the life and mission of the Church. By the end of the day, our group was ready and willing. Our program was launched. In the years ahead, we counseled students, placed dozens of their CO statements on file, and represented three ROTC students and got them discharged from the military. . . .

Looking back, I should not have been surprised at Tom's stellar presentations that day, because all these things written about him since his death - they're all true. He played a pivotal role in the peace movement in the 1960's. An 'architect," as Robert Ellsberg wrote in *America*.

In 1963, Tom organized the first public demonstration against the Vietnam War. In 1964, he attended the [Thomas] Merton retreat on the Spiritual Roots of Protest. A few weeks later, on New Year's Day in 1965, he and Jim Forest launched the Catholic Peace Fellowship (CPF). That year in October, while a proud Dorothy Day and A.J. Muste looked on, Tom burned his draft card for which he was eventually convicted and sentenced to six months in prison. . . .

The work of CPF went on for years- the talks, conferences, the *CPF Bulletin*, and the counseling giving help to fifty young men a week, at one point. This was not simply helping draft dodgers. It was helping young people to discern their consciences. Conscience, in Catholic

tradition, is an interior witness to the law of God, a voice within by which all of us are to conduct our lives in times of war. This has always been a firm principle in Catholic teaching. This is why Tom was always ready to discuss just war principles, pacifist vision and principle, whatever was on the heart and mind of the person in front of him. He said of the work of CPF: "We don't counsel conscientious objection, non-cooperation, resistance, interference with Selective Service, or anything else. We counsel young men."

In a broad ecumenical spirit, Tom worked for the Fellowship of Reconciliation for many years (1965-79). He also had a hand in starting Pax Christi USA and served as a formal consultant to the Catholic bishops in the United States as they drafted their pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace* (1983), one of two representatives of pacifism and nonviolence, the other being Gordon Zahn. Of course, [the bishops] also brought in big-picture, big-shot policy makers to testify, and more listened to them. . . . Would that our dear successors to the apostles had listened to "the little shots," like Tom and Gordon, who grasped the real big picture—a cosmos governed by justice, tempered by mercy, enveloped in the love revealed in Jesus Christ, especially in His teaching and example on peace.

These highlights were but moments in Tom's life that, like all of ours, was mainly mundane. Tom told me once that he went to live at the Catholic Worker to do great things, heroic things. They put him on to peeling potatoes and carrots, and he wondered, "When do the great, heroic acts start?"

The next year, he met Monica Ribar "over a pot of soup," as Monica says. They courted and got married. Soon ,Tommy and Deirdre came along, and they had a bona fide Catholic Worker family. Anyone who knew Tom knew he was only possible because of Monica. I cannot but think there were hard years. We get hints of this in Dorothy's diaries, a family in financial straits, Tom seeking help, a lay mendicant's existence.

The Cornells eventually started a house and soup kitchen in Waterbury. Tom was also ordained a deacon. He continued his peace activism. In 1990, Bill Cavanaugh, Maureen Sweeney, Margaret Garvey, Tom, and myself responded to the call of two Mennonites in Germany who were struggling to handle the scores of CO claims. Tom's voice and experience was a rudder. . . . That was a tough war. The worst. The nation wanted to prove it was beyond Vietnam. Beyond, into what?

In 1993, Tom and Monica settled at the Peter Maurin Farm in Marlboro, New York. He did not really retire. He was teaching for the archdiocese, preaching as deacon, going to other places to give talks. . . . In August 2002, as it became obvious the US was gearing up for the invasion of Iraq, an email from him appeared in my in-box: "Christmas in Baghdad? Could happen." We went for three weeks, paid courtesy calls to Iraqi cultural and Muslim leaders (he was a master at that)and visited the Vatican on the way home to report what we had seen to Cardinal Renato Martino. Tom was a dutiful son of the Church.

He was a dutiful mentor, as well, to the CPF during our re-founding which he generously supported. A friend recently said of Tom, "I've never met a more encouraging Christian." That's what I felt that day at Notre Dame back in 1981. . . .

Tom, how grateful we are. That's why we cry. Grateful for God's help through the hard times, grateful for your making it easier to be good, grateful for the laughter of so many good times, grateful for the glory days of the past, but more grateful for the glory days ahead. Ω

Running Every Town in Massachusetts

by Karen Pajer

After I ran all 2,483 streets of Worcester in 2019 with my running buddy, Scott Schaeffer-Duffy, everyone kept asking what's your next project? I had no intentions of doing anything else, until the Central Mass Striders Banquet in June of 2021, where I heard Meghan MacDonald talk about her COVID project to run in every town in her state of Rhode Island. A little bell inside my head went off. *"That's kind of neat."* I had already wondered about how many of the 351 towns in Massachusetts I didn't even know existed. I mentioned the idea to Scott, (He is the only person crazy enough to do it with me.) but he immediately said ABSOLUTELY NOT!!! I heard, "I'll think about it." Between June and October, I kept planting little seeds until October 30 when he asked me if we were running tomorrow. At first, I didn't understand that he meant running the towns. Once I realized he had agreed to run the towns and "tomorrow" was going to be Halloween, I said we have to start in Salem at sunrise and run two towns, 6.67 miles. I didn't want the voodoo of 6.66.

Now that we had started the project, I had to make up rules. There are 351 towns, so I decided we had to run them in 351 days. I also felt a 5K, 3.1 miles, in each town was enough, and that we could run two or three times a week, doing more than one town at a time, especially for the places over an hour away.

Sometimes picking towns was based on events. Salem on Halloween. Plymouth near Thanksgiving. Hopkinton and Ashland on the day of the Boston Marathon. The Lexington to Concord on the day after Patriot's Day. Gardner for South High's X-Country meet. Attleboro to see LaSalette Shrine around Christmas. WEB DuBois' homestead on Juneteenth Weekend.

We also joined local races where we could: The Whitin 5 in Northbridge. The Tough Ten-Miler in Marlboro & Hudson. 5Ks in West Boylston, Wakefield, and Holyoke.

Sometimes the locations depended on weather. We went to Saugus to avoid heavy rain elsewhere, to Seekonk, Rehoboth, and Dighton to run in 20º instead of 10º, to Amherst, South Hadley, and Hadley to avoid snow, and to Spencer and Charlton at 5 AM to run before a snowstorm.

On July 18, I expected a sunny day to run Mount Sugarloaf in Conway, but, unfortunately, it was drizzly and foggy because I had checked the forecast for Conway, South Carolina. I had better luck finding cooler temperatures during a heat wave on shady trails in Peru, Hinsdale, Washington, and Lee.

I also had to consider time constraints, traffic, and parking. Planning each outing sometimes took hours.

I did most of the driving. Scott helped pay for gas with $2 bills — so many, many, many $2 bills. Scott would hold onto the handle above the passenger door (sometimes for a WHOLE 2 hour drive). Scott drove once in a while with his gas-saving Prius—but that's a SLOW process. He drives at least 5 mph BELOW the speed limit. Conversations consisted of stupid things like "Are we there yet?" and counting how many running stickers we would see on cars (only 1 out of 200!).

We did take ferries to Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Gosnold, and a pontoon boat from Chilmark to Aquinnah. We took busses to get from town to town on Martha's Vineyard.

We ran in all types of weather—humid and 96°, bitter cold with a windchill of -10°, pouring rain, thunder and lightning, fog, snow, and ice.

We ran mostly on roads, some major, some minor, some with sidewalks, some with no shoulder, roads with no traffic, roads with fast moving traffic, dirt roads, and cobblestone streets. We also did a fair share of trails. Paved rail trails. Single path trails. Steep trails. Rock and root covered trails. Trails with flagstone paths. On rocks to cross streams. Up hills to towers and tops of mountains.

It was very challenging to run in each of the 351 towns in Massachusetts, but to do so in 351 days made the task so much more difficult. Not only was it a challenge time-wise to get it done, but also physically challenging when we had to run more miles than we wanted to in a day or series of days in order to stay on track to complete the project in time. With that being said, it was good that I set the time-limit or it might not have gotten done at all.

In retrospect, I am glad we did this project. It was neat to see so much of the state that I didn't know existed. I learned a great deal. In my planning, I investigated routes that would immerse us in natural beauty, expose us to remarkable architecture, unveil chapters in Massachusett's historical saga, or expose us to curiosities that were downright quirky. I dove into Google to discover a myriad of remarkable locations. Contrary to my expectations, I would actually like to visit every town again, not as a running project and not with a time limit, but because, despite the enormous variety of locations we visited, I now know there are many magical sites still to be seen. Ω

Letters

Dear Scott & Claire,
I write in thanks for the inspired statement in the latest issue of *The Catholic Radical* on "Law and Abortion." Since the Dobbs decision was announced, I don't think I've read anything that spoke as well to my own beliefs as this brief, yet exceedingly thoughtful piece did. Few are better able to resist the siren call of state action as the solution to all things than those who've encountered the world the way Catholic Workers do. In my view, your statement is deeply faithful to the Catholic Worker tradition and I strongly suspect is very much like what Dorothy Day might have said were she alive today. That she spoke so little about her own personal encounter with this issue I've always thought was one of the ways that she made space for the "revolution of the heart" about which you write.

Joe McCartin
Bethesda, Maryland

Friends,
Just a quick note of deep gratitude for the inspiration I receive from your lives and writing. Everything in *The Catholic Radical* is such a gift.

"Law & Abortion" and "Catholic Priests" in the August/September issue, I thought, were among the most interesting and thoughtful articles I've read all month, anywhere.

Bruce Friedrich
Washington, DC

Dear Claire and Scott,
"Mass Shootings" and "Law and Abortion" [*Catholic Radical,* August/September 2022] stand out, nationally, for strong thinking and simple, clear, direct writing.

John Greenman
Columbus, Georgia

Your editorial on guns and abortion connected so many similarities. Some of these are below.

• The right to bear arms, or the right to reproductive justice, does not eclipse the right to life.

• The uncertain times of the global pandemic prompted some Americans to purchase guns and abortions.

• People who live in countries with far lower casualty rates in both guns and abortion than ours wonder why we don't object to the killing of our own people, especially when the victims are our own children.

• Those in the peace movement are used to this question: "What would you do if someone was attacking your grandmother?" Those in the anti-abortion movement are used to being asked "What would you do if someone was raping your daughter?"

• Those who support abortion rights or gun rights may do so for these "extreme cases." But let's be honest: Mass killing in both these cases are not for life-threatening or just reasons.

• Pro-gun rights voices, and pro-abortion rights voices, have become more brazenly menacing.

• Tactical gear and abortion services are openly marketed at gun shows and health fairs, and widely advertised on social media.

• Our troubles run deeper than politicians corrupted by the gun lobby or the abortion rights lobby.

• We need to challenge those who have sacralized instruments of death, to confront the economics of this violence. To divest from businesses involved in the manufacture or sale of assault weapons or abortions/abortion pills, that profit from the creation of a thing that is killing people.

• The revealed truth we keep ignoring or denying: God wants us to choose life not death.

After all, the name of this newspaper is not *The Catholic Radical* for nothing.

Carol Crossed
Rochester, New York

Editor's Note: A beloved, long-time reader of The Catholic Radical *died and kindly remembered our community in her will. As past recipients of generosity from other Catholic Worker houses, we reached out to a number of communities to ask if they needed any help. One of these Catholic Workers volunteers sent us the following remarkable letter:*

Dear Scott and Claire,
I received your email offering to send us some financial contribution. I would like to thank you for your generosity. It feels good that you remember us and think of us. I really appreciate it. Truly!

Our house is currently comfortable, partly because we are indeed a small operation and small in number, (in keeping with the "little way"). I also feel that receiving money when we are comfortable would make us lose our precarity so dear, I believe, to our Catholic Worker ethos. I feel that receiving something beyond what we need would be, as the Catholic Fathers said, taking from others who are in need. I also want to believe in Dorothy Day who said that having enough is enough, and to put our security not on accumulation, but on God's providence (while picketing the saints). Ever so thankful for your heart overflowing with kindness, I am asking you to share what you are offering to us with other Catholic Worker houses which are financially struggling. By doing so, you will keep us faithful. I promise that if we are ever in need , I will ask.

Name withheld to protect his or her humility

Dear Scott,
Thanks for your defense of the beleaguered priesthood in the newsletter! It astounds me how much respect for the priesthood people still demonstrate after everything that has happened.
Love and prayers,

Father Terry Moran
Convent Station, New Jersey

Scott,
Thank you for your article "Catholic Priests." I hear so few positive comments about the priesthood, so yours was a breath of fresh air. We are all under suspect.
Thank you again!
In Jesus, Street Person, and Rebel,

Father River Sims
Tenemos Catholic Worker
San Francisco, California

To You All,
Thanks again for your truthful edition of *The Catholic Radical*. Richard Deeds' experience ["Reflections on Prison"] has

validity. As an old sociology professor said, "You need to be an ex-addict to know addiction."

I'm reading Richard Rohr's **What Do We Do With Evil?,** again. I still highlight the points I can relate to.

I took a bike ride in the Quabbin Reservoir area and took a lot of phone pictures of Monarch butterflies. Back and forth to Mexico they fly. Wow.

Peace out.

Brian Earl
Worcester, Massachusetts

Dear CW Radical,
Arthur Milholland, MD's letter repeats the slanderous talking points against Robert F Kennedy, Jr. from your April Fools issue that have been alleged several times over by most popular magazines, such as the NYT Mag, which he cites.

Let me restore context. Many of us work hard to evaluate such public problems as COVID and have hard-won convictions about what's "right." But none of us can know for sure that s/he is "right," not in this life. That is not given. That is why we CWs are personalist communitarians and the question is not who's right but how the Holy Spirit is leading each of us. Our task is therefore to listen and reflect quietly, in order to discern spirits, in ourselves and in the community, and to determine what the Holy Spirit is leading us to do, first individually and then maybe as a community. Least of all can we afford to censor and suppress any opinion within the community. Rather it's a gift. CWs do not vote or issue press releases but, like Quakers, listen to the Spirit speaking in ourselves and through each other. Our job is to facilitate unanimity or, if that is impossible, to suspend communal decision and act independently.

Context: There has been a small but ardent anti-vaccination movement, especially among those who feel that they've been hurt by a vaccine, ever since vaccination came into our culture in the early 18th century, either from shamans in Turkey or from shamans in Africa, according to which origin story you have learned. There are reasons for questioning vaccines. The question is not settled. Medical science rarely is, and its progress depends upon informed dissent, sometimes against powerful established opposition. Some contemporary doctors recommend against taking some or all vaccines (e,g, flu, DPT, polio). Nor is there just one solution for every illness. Some people consult a naturopath, homeopath, osteopath, life style medical doctor, or Gandhian medical practitioner as well as a medical doctor. Big establishment medicine is dominated by epidemiology, and epidemiology is dominated by vaccination—give an epidemiologist a problem, and he'll give you a vaccine. Schools and the military require vaccination for membership. They have become dominant in our culture. But there has been a history of problems and corruption with establishment drugs and vaccines. There is patient resistance At least one-third of medical patients have first been to an alternative practitioner, and the AMA has been forced to make room for alternative practitioners, to admit the importance of nutrition in health, and to acknowledge the hazards of smoking and of environmental contamination, despite previous resistance. Research has exploded in these fields. Medical school students are hungry for this information. Medical schools, though, are so heavy with requirements that they are slow to change.

We need to listen to each other and to gather in prayer. That is the reason for CW gatherings.

Daniel Marshall
New York, New York

*Editor's Note: We agree with our friend Daniel that nothing can be known with absolute certainty. As Saint Paul says, "**We see through a glass darkly.**"*

Daniel is also correct that evaluating public problems requires listening to determine what beliefs we should endorse and actions we should take. Dorothy Day did this before she embraced pacifism and, later on, followed the Holy Spirit to start a journal of opinion, The Catholic Worker, *to promote that nonviolent ideal. She did not publish articles which contradicted pacifism. She did not invite militarists to give talks at the Catholic Worker, although many of the attendees expressed alternate views, just as many people, who send letters to this journal, disagree with us.*

Like Doctor Milholland, we believe vaccines save lives. We consider saving lives a vital part of pacifism.

Catholic Worker Calendar

October 5 & 19, November 2 & 16 — Evening Prayer: Please join us for prayer & Taize chant. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7 PM.

October 26 — Running Massachusetts: Please come see a slide presentation by Karen Pajer & Scott Schaeffer-Duffy on their successful quest to run 3.1 miles in all 351 Massachusetts cities and towns. Blessed Sacrament Church's Phelan Center, 551 Pleasant Street, Worcester. 7 PM. Refreshments to follow.

International Catholic Worker Gathering — October 21-23: Please join Catholic Workers from around the world celebrating the Mustard Seed Catholic Worker's 50th anniversary and our movement. Saturday events will be in the Hogan Center of the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester.

Mason Street Musings

I write this column sitting in a wingback chair in the corner of our spacious, "new" living room. The douglas fir floor beneath my feet has been sanded and polished to a beautiful luster. On a bright morning, sunlight pours through the room's four windows. This once cramped, dingy space is now large enough for our grand-daughter May to practice hand-stands which she does quite often.

A generous donation, received in July, allowed us to hire Shawn Renihan, his partner Chris, and Mr. Cong for the renovation. Shawn knocked down a closet and a portion of the wall dividing the front and middle rooms then seamlessly framed the new opening. He and Chris painted the enlarged space in historical hues — Andover cream in the front, pale organza in the back. With the fastidious attention of a craftsmen, Mr. Cong sanded all the dips and ripples in floorboards laid by men more than a century ago. Whenever we do a house project, I wonder about these builders from the past. Did they expect their construction to last a hundred years? Our new room looks so airy and lovely, Scott feels self-conscious using it.

"Kinda like a museum," he said.

After the men finished their work and we put the furniture in place, I invited the

children and grandchildren for a room blessing. Please God, may it be a place of prayer, sing-alongs, and meetings where we plot how to foster a society based on creed instead of greed. The national Catholic Worker gathering will provide an important initiation. We anticipate two hundred Catholic Workers descending on Worcester, October 21-23, at least six of whom will stay on Mason Street.

Other changes are happening. The Brazilian family and Reina, the matriarch of a large clan, moved out of Mason Court. New neighbors moved in. We hear talk of plans to build much-needed housing on the nearby vacant lot and on the property next door to us. The new construction means more people, more cars. In August, I attended a planning board meeting to plead for more trees. We need their canopy to provide heat relief for pedestrians and a resting place for the crows and hawks who have taken up residence here on the street.

Last summer's heat and drought was not all misery for it brought days of skies filled with glorious cottony clouds. It was under such a sky in early August, the grass all brittle and brown, that friends and loved ones laid to rest Catholic Worker Tom Cornell. We sang the "Salve Regina" for the second time as two stoop-shouldered undertakers lowered the coffin into the earth's stark hole. To review Tom's life is to marvel at how the Holy Spirit can work her way in a person and realize so much good.

Days of drenching rain have rendered the summer heat a distant memory. The chilly nights mean more requests for hospitality; we are getting as many as four a day. Yesterday, we welcomed a new guest, Mr. E. a highly educated environmental engineer from Ghana. Like us, he is an avid listerner of NPR radio. I could hear reports about the war in Ukraine pouring out of his room early this morning.

Up on the summit of Mt. Wachusett, the hawks are winging their way to Mexico. Each fall, four to six million raptors fly over the state of Veracruz en route to Central and South America. I would love to witness their passage some day, to see the Holy Spirit embodied, swooping the earth. Blessed autumn, everyone. Ω

Claire

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